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SOCIAL ATTITUDES AMONG HISPANIC AND MAINSTREAM NAVY RECRUITS.(U)

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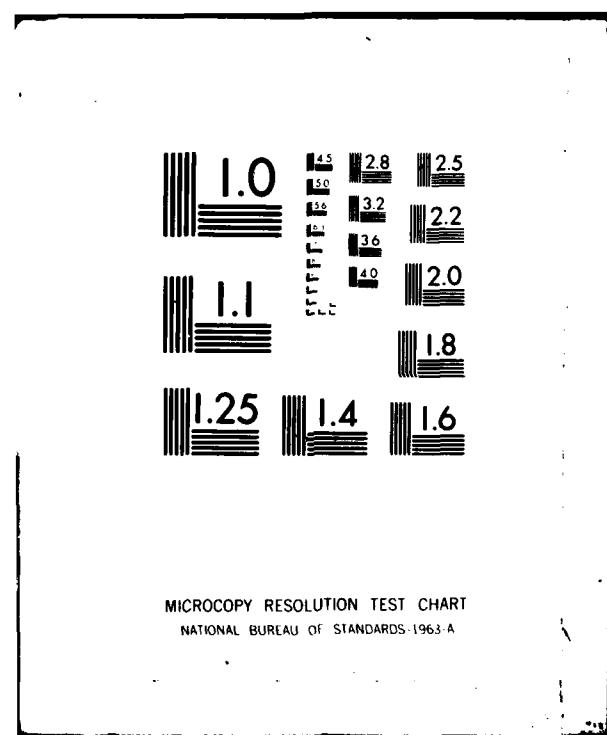
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# PERSONNEL TECHNOLOGY

AN EXAMINATION OF HISPANIC AND GENERAL POPULATION  
PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS  
(Harry C. Triandis, Principal Investigator)

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21. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Eighty Hispanic and 80 Mainstream Navy recruits responded to a 78 item questionnaire measuring attitudes toward a broad sample of social issues. Several factor analyses were carried out and revealed that only one factor		

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(Religiosity) had the same meaning for the two samples. There were no differences between the two samples on religiosity. The structuring of the items by the two samples suggests different concerns and emphases: The Mainstream factors (see Table 2) contrast Sexual Liberalism with Conservatism. The most similar Hispanic factor linked this dimension with Religiosity. The Mainstream data produced a Tendermindedness factor that has emerged in many factor analyses of social attitudes done on data obtained from college students, but the Hispanics did not produce this factor. The Hispanics produced a Political Conservatism vs Liberalism factor which the Mainstream sample did not produce; also a Mysticism factor which was missing from the Mainstream factor analysis. We conclude that the stereotype of Hispanics as more religious than the Mainstream is not supported by these data. At least, the way the Navy is recruiting Hispanics there is no evidence in support of that stereotype. The Hispanic emphasis on a Political factor suggests that they may be more concerned with this dimension than Mainstream Navy recruits. That finding also fits other data collected in this project which shows that the Hispanic Navy recruits have a more complex perception of political stimuli than the Mainstream. These differences may be due to the Hispanics having more information or a greater inclination toward idealism, or both.

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Social Attitudes among Hispanic and Mainstream Navy Recruits

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Attitudes toward a sample of social objects usually show a particular structure. That is, people who hold positive attitudes toward some attitude objects also hold positive attitudes toward other related objects, and negative attitudes toward still other objects. Thus, Ferguson (1939), using factor analysis, found a cluster of attitudes he called religiosity which included opposition to birth control and to the theory of evolution, and positive attitudes toward religious concepts, and a factor he called tender-mindedness characterized by opposition to war and severe punishment of criminals as well as capital punishment. Comrey and Newmeyer (1965) sampled a wider range of attitude objects and rediscovered the factors of religious and nonpunitive attitudes as well as a cluster of attitudes favoring welfare, characterized by liberal political preferences, support for federal government involvement in society, and unionism; a cluster of nationalistic attitudes, favoring service to the country and opposition to pacifism, world government, and population control, and a cluster of racial tolerance. Second order factor analyses have sometimes emerged with a single radicalism (welfare, racial tolerance) vs conservatism (punitive attitudes, nationalism, religiosity) pattern, while Eysenck (1960) has argued that there are two basic dimensions: radicalism-conservatism and tough-tendermindedness.

The present investigation examines whether there are any systematic similarities and differences in the social attitudes held by Hispanic and Mainstream Navy recruits.

### Method

#### Subjects

Eighty Hispanic and 80 Mainstream recruits responded to a questionnaire while being classified into Navy jobs, as part of a larger study of the perceptions of the social environment by these recruits. In each of the three Navy recruit stations (Florida, California and Illinois) when a Spanish surname recruit was to be classified the officer in charge checked the recruit's self-identification on an application form completed by all recruits, on which "Hispanic" was one of the ways in which the applicant could describe himself. If the Spanish-surname recruit had selected the "Hispanic" self-identification label, he was asked to complete a number of questionnaires, which included the items of the present study (see below). At that time another recruit (with a non-Spanish surname) was randomly selected and given the same questionnaires. These other recruits are here referred to as "Mainstream", and will include both whites and blacks as well as Hispanics who did not self-identify with the "Hispanic" label.

#### Instruments

The instrument consisted of 78 items selected from the work of others: They were taken from a study by Davis, Wrigley and Castelein (1960) which used factor analysis of a large set of attitudes to arrive at four factors (Religious Conformity, Tolerance for Minorities, Criticism of Social Institutions, and Sympathetic Understanding); the work of Budner (1962) who measured Tolerance for Ambiguity with a balanced set of 20 items, and the works of Piersma (1974) and Randall and Desrosiers (1980) who measured Religious Locus of Control and Attitudes toward the Supernatural respectively.

#### Analyses

Since the number of items (78) is large relative to the number of subjects, to obtain more stability we randomly split the 78 items into three

sets of 26, and added five "marker variables" to each set (variables that were correlated highly with many other variables in the 73 by 73 matrix of inter-correlations). Thus, we had three sets of 28 variables. The 28 by 28 matrices were factored, using principal axes factor analyses with oblique rotations. Communalities were estimated through a procedure in which the program determines the number of factors to be extracted from the original correlation matrix, and replaces the main diagonal elements of the correlation matrix with initial estimates of communalities computed as the squared multiple correlation between a given variable and the remaining variables in the matrix. Next, it extracts the same number of factors from this reduced matrix and continues iterating until the communality estimates become stable. Four factors were extracted because the drop in the eigenvalues indicated four factors, and an oblique rotation was carried out. Subsequently, the 20 variables that had the highest loadings in the just mentioned analyses were placed in a new factor analysis. This approach has the advantage of sampling many variables, with factor analyses that are relatively stable (because there are 3 to 4 times as many subjects as variables).

#### Results and Discussion

Cross-cultural comparisons can only be made when the factor structures obtained from the Hispanic and Mainstream samples are similar. When these structures are different it suggests that the meaning of the items differs for the two cultural groups and hence comparisons of item means are not appropriate.

Table 1 shows the factor structures obtained from the first round of factor analyses. Religiosity emerged in all three samples of variables, replicating previous work (e.g., Comrey and Newmeyer, 1965; Ferguson, 1939). Sexual Radicalism was obtained from both cultural groups in Sample 2. Tolerance for Ambiguity was extracted from several samples but it was not

always defined by the same items. Thus it is not certain that Tolerance for Ambiguity has the same meaning for the two ethnic groups. Criticism of Social Institutions emerged in sample 3, but not very clearly.

The similarity in the items with the highest loadings in the Religiosity Factor for both samples together with the fact that there were no significant differences between Hispanics and Mainstream respondents in their levels of agreement with the given items (see below), confirms previous studies (e.g., Szalay, Williams, Bryson & West, 1976) where Anglos and Hispanics were found to show their highest level of agreement when providing their perceptions of religion. These results together with the frequent finding that shows Hispanics as equally religious as Anglos (Grebler, Moore & Guzman, 1970) and as considering their religion as important as Anglos do (Our Sunday Visitor, 1978), cast some doubt on the stereotypical perceptions of Hispanics as being more religious than Anglos.

The second round of factor analyses gave the results shown in Table 2. The Mainstream factor replicated the results obtained by others, in that both a Religiosity and a Tendermindedness factor emerged. However, the Hispanics did not produce the latter factor. The Sexual Liberalism-Conservatism factor of the Mainstream appeared in the Hispanic sample, but with a strong link to religious attitudes.

In general, there is not enough correspondence between the Mainstream and Hispanic samples to permit item comparisons. Nevertheless, t-tests were done to see if there were any important differences. A total of 13 out of the 78 items showed a significant difference. However, none of the items showing a difference had the same meaning in the two cultural groups, as determined from the factor analyses. Also, there was a strong tendency for the Hispanic sample to show an acquiescence response set, since in all of the 13 items the Hispanics agreed with the item more than did the Mainstream

respondents. Thus, it is not possible to have any confidence regarding how meaningful the obtained results are since they could be due to a response set or to the different meanings of the item in the two ethnic groups.

At a more speculative level one may wonder why the Hispanics did not produce a Tendermindedness factor. Given that most of the earlier studies reported in the literature were based on college student samples and the fact that our Mainstream sample is of higher socioeconomic level than our Hispanic sample (Triandis et al., 1982), it is possible to speculate that the Tendermindedness factor may be more likely to emerge in the upper lower and middle classes, rather than among the less privileged samples of society. The less privileged may not be able to "afford" the luxury of worrying about social policy issues such as the death penalty and the treatment of criminals. This interpretation seems unlikely given that it is the poor and minority members of society who are the ones more directly affected by the above mentioned societal policies due to institutional racism, increased policing of minority and poor neighborhoods, and police brutality. A more plausible interpretation is that this particular group of Hispanics is divided on these issues, some agreeing with one item and disagreeing with the other, so that the items do not correlate among themselves or with other items in a systematic way. This would preclude the emergence of a Tendermindedness factor. A similar interpretation may account for the lack of a Tolerance for Ambiguity factor among Hispanics.

On the other hand, the emergence of a Political Conservatism-Liberalism factor in the Hispanic but not in the Mainstream sample, may imply that the greater interest of Hispanics in ideological matters (Lisansky, 1981) is reflected in the emergence of this factor from the Hispanic data.

Obviously, these speculations will have to be supported by other data before they are taken seriously. At this point all we can do is offer the results of Table 2 as a description of the pattern of similarities and differences of Hispanic and Mainstream Navy recruit attitudes toward a variety of social objects.

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**Table 1: Factor Names, Wording of Typical Items and Loadings Obtained from Mainstream and Hispanic Samples**

	<u>Mainstream</u>	<u>Sample 1</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
<u>Factor 1: Religiosity</u>		<u>Factor 1: Religiosity</u>	
Items:	The universe was created by God (.88)	The universe was created by God (.67)	
	There is no survival of any kind after death (-.80)	There is no survival of any kind after death (-.45)	
<u>Factor 2: Tolerance for Ambiguity vs. Low Sympath. Understanding</u>		<u>Factor 2: Tolerance for Ambiguity vs. Criticism of Social Institutions</u>	
Items:	Often the most interesting and stimulating people are those who don't mind being different and original (.70)	I would like to live in a foreign country for a while (-.31)	
	Birth control, except when recommended by a doctor, should be made illegal (-.39)	Sunday observance is oldfashioned, and should cease to govern our behavior (.53)	
<u>Factor 3: Radicalism</u>		<u>Factor 3: Tolerance for Ambiguity with Rejection of Supernaturalism</u>	
Items:	Divorce laws should be altered to make divorce easier (.47)	Many of our most important decisions are based on insufficient information (.65)	
		Fortune tellers' predictions are true due to coincidence (.59)	
<u>Factor 4: Rejection of Abortion, Homosexuality, Card Reading vs Acceptance of Astrology</u>			

Table 1 (continued)

	Mainstream	Sample 2	Hispanics
<u>Factor 1: Religiosity</u>		<u>Factor 1: Religiosity</u>	
God is sovereign and all-powerful (.87)		The universe was created by God (.78)	
The idea of God is an invention of human mind (-.62)		There is no survival of any kind after death (-.58)	
<u>Factor 2: Tolerance for Ambiguity vs Mysticism</u>		<u>Factor 2: Low Tolerance for Ambiguity vs Mysticism</u>	
Teachers or supervisors who hand out vague assignments give a chance for one to show initiative and originality (.30)		I like parties where I know most of the people more than ones where all or most of the people are complete strangers (.37)	
Planetary forces quite possibly control personality (-.64)		The position of the planets and stars at birth determines how one turns out (-.77)	
<u>Factor 3: Sexual Radicalism</u>		<u>Factor 3: (Difficult to interpret)</u>	
Men and women have the right to find out whether they are sexually suited before marriage (e.g. trial marriage) (.62)			
Sex relations except in marriage are always wrong (-.62)			
		<u>Factor 4: Same as Sexual Radicalism of Mainstream</u>	

Table 1 (continued)

	<u>Mainstream</u>	<u>Sample 3</u>	<u>Hispanics</u>
<u>Factor 1: Religiosity</u>		<u>Factor 1: Religiosity</u>	
The universe was created by God (.79)		The universe was created by God (.83)	
There is no survival of any kind after death (-.74)		There is no survival of any kind after death (-.64)	
<u>Factor 2: Criticism of Social Institutions</u>		<u>Factor 2: Tolerance for Ambiguity</u>	
Ultimately private property should be abolished and complete socialism introduced (.68)		It is more fun to tackle a complicated problem than to solve a simple one (.68)	
In taking part in any form of world organization this country should make certain that none of its independence and power are lost (-.54)			
<u>Factor 3: Low Tolerance for Ambiguity</u>		<u>Factor 3: Criticism of Social Institutions</u>	
An expert who does not come up with a definite answer probably does not know too much (.59)		Ultimately private property should be abolished and complete socialism introduced (.72)	
		<u>Factor 4: Rejection of Religion</u>	
		The average man can live a good life without religion (.55)	

Table 2: Factor Names, Items and Loadings Obtained from Mainstream and Hispanic Samples in Second Round of Analyses

Mainstream	(Variance accounted by 4 factors: 51.4%)	Hispanic (Variance accounted by 4 factors: 48.1%)
<u>Religiosity</u>		<u>Political Conservatism vs Liberalism</u>
The universe was created by God. (.80)		In taking part in any form of world organization, this country should make certain that none of its independence and power is lost. (.80)
There is no survival of any kind after death. (-.81)		Compulsory military training in peace-time is essential for survival of this country. (.75)
The idea of God is an invention of the human mind. (-.69)		In the interest of peace we must give up part of our national sovereignty. (-.33)
Tolerance for Ambiguity		<u>Religiosity with Sexual Conservatism</u>
Often the most interesting and stimulating people are those who don't mind being different and original. (.57)		The church should attempt to increase its influence on the life of the nation. (.60)
The position of planets and stars at birth determines how one turns out. (-.42)		Birth control, except when recommended by a doctor, should be made illegal. (.55)
<u>Sexual Liberalism - Conservatism</u>		The world is controlled by a man-loving God, and we are only carrying out his wishes. (.32)
Men and women have the right to find out whether they are sexually suited before marriage (e.g. by trial marriage). (.61)		Men and women have the right to find out whether they are sexually suited before marriage (e.g. by trial marriage). (-.35)
Sex relations except in marriage are always wrong. (-.67)		
Homosexuals are hardly better than criminals and ought to be severely punished. (-.46)		
<u>Tendermindedness</u>		<u>Pure Religiosity</u>
The death penalty is barbaric and should be abolished. (.74)		The universe was created by God. (.59)
Our treatment of criminals is too harsh; we should try to cure them, not punish them. (.61)		The idea of God is an invention of the human mind. (-.77)
		<u>Mysticism</u>
		The position of planets and stars at birth determines how one turns out. (.72)

